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Accreditation Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria: Challenges and Status

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Abstract

This study assesses the accreditation process at Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, focusing on accreditation types, statuses, and challenges. A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing structured questionnaires administered to 12 librarians across the university's satellite libraries that had previously undergone accreditation. The study identifies three primary accreditation types: program accreditation (33.3%), resource verification (33.3%), and institutional accreditation (33.3%). Accreditation outcomes show that 47.8% of programs received full accreditation, 34.8% were granted interim status, while 17.4% were denied due to non-compliance with accreditation requirements. Findings highlight key challenges affecting accreditation, including lack of current resources (27.8%), inadequate funding (22.2%), frequent power supply disruptions (25%), and limited technical expertise among satellite librarians (13.9%). Additionally, 22.5% of accreditation exercises relied on borrowing resources from individual staff members rather than institutional acquisition, raising concerns about the sustainability of accreditation readiness. Furthermore, delays in fund release (17.5%) and insufficient manpower (14.3%) were identified as critical obstacles to meeting accreditation standards. The study recommends proactive measures such as regular mock accreditation exercises to identify and address deficiencies before official evaluations. Additionally, the university administration should prioritize timely funding allocation to support resource acquisition and infrastructure improvements. Capacity-building programs should also be implemented to enhance the technical skills of librarians, ensuring they can effectively manage accreditation requirements. Addressing these challenges will enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the accreditation process in the university's libraries.

Key words: Accreditation, Library Resources, Higher Education, Quality Assurance, Institutional Assessment

Introduction

Universities play a crucial role in imparting knowledge, developing skills, and fostering competencies that enable students to be productive, earn a living, and contribute to national development (Akpan & Etor, 2016). The university system is primarily responsible for teaching, learning, and research, which are essential for community service and societal advancement. To maintain and enhance the quality of education, universities undergo accreditation processes to ensure compliance with Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) and institutional objectives (National Universities Commission [NUC], 2019). Accreditation is a structured and systematic review that evaluates academic programs based on predefined benchmarks. It ensures that universities achieve excellence in education, scholarship, and infrastructure (CHEA, 2010; NBA, 2019). Through accreditation, institutions can develop, sustain, and improve their educational programs while assuring stakeholders of quality and compliance with regulatory standards set by the National Universities Commission (NUC) (Anugom, 2016). Studies suggest that accreditation enhances institutional credibility and promotes academic excellence (Obadara & Alaka, 2013).

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), as one of Nigeria's first-generation universities, has 12 satellite libraries within its main library. These satellite libraries are located across different campuses, including the Institution of Administration in Congo and the main campus in Samaru. The libraries function as hybrid systems, offering both physical and digital services to support learning and research (Alani & Ilusanya, 2008). Each year, ABU undergoes program accreditation and resource verification, particularly for newly introduced courses. However, challenges such as funding constraints, outdated resources, and technical limitations affect accreditation outcomes (Comfort & Veronica, 2020). This study examines the accreditation process in ABU's satellite libraries, highlighting key challenges and recommending strategies for improvement.

Statement of the Problem

The management of library facilities at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) is crucial for supporting teaching, learning, and research. The university's satellite libraries play a central role in meeting accreditation criteria by ensuring that academic resources remain up-to-date and accessible to students and faculty. These libraries are responsible for the acquisition, selection, and dissemination of information resources, which are essential for academic excellence and institutional accreditation. Despite efforts to maintain quality, funding constraints remain a significant challenge. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and university administration provide financial support for resource acquisition; however, the rapid expansion of the university and increasing academic demands have rendered this funding insufficient (Obadara & Alaka, 2013). As a result, many satellite libraries struggle to meet accreditation requirements due to inadequate resources, outdated materials, and infrastructural deficiencies (Akpan & Etor, 2016).

A critical issue in the accreditation process is resource verification, which often results in denial of accreditation due to non-compliance with required standards. Inadequate funding leads to challenges such as borrowing resources from individual staff members for accreditation purposes rather than institutional procurement, raising concerns about the sustainability of the process (Comfort & Veronica, 2020). Furthermore, the absence of modern technological tools and limited technical expertise among satellite librarians hinder effective accreditation preparation. Failure to address these challenges has resulted in students graduating with substandard education, affecting their competitiveness in the job market and diminishing the institution's academic reputation. This study seeks to explore these challenges and propose strategies for improving accreditation preparedness in ABU's libraries.

Research Questions

1. What types of accreditation are conducted by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Ahmadu Bello University satellite libraries?
2. What is the current accreditation status of Ahmadu Bello University satellite libraries?
3. What are the major challenges affecting the accreditation process in Ahmadu Bello University satellite libraries?

Research Objectives

1. To identify the types of accreditation conducted by the NUC in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
2. To assess the accreditation status of Ahmadu Bello University satellite libraries.
3. To analyze the key challenges affecting accreditation and propose solutions to enhance the accreditation process at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Review of Related literature

Definition and Purpose of Accreditation

Accreditation is widely recognized as a quality assurance mechanism in higher education. According to Lee (2004), accreditation signifies that an institution or program meets specified minimum standards. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA, 2010) defines accreditation as both a process and a status, where institutions undergo evaluations based on predetermined quality standards. Similarly, the National Board of Accreditation (NBA, 2019) describes accreditation as a systematic process aimed at ensuring continuous improvement in educational programs.

Bittick (2003) highlights that accreditation allows institutions to conduct in-depth evaluations of their processes, helping to identify and resolve long-standing issues. In this regard, accreditation serves not only as a benchmarking tool but also as a mechanism for institutional improvement (Aithal, 2016).

Benefits of Accreditation

Several studies emphasize the benefits of accreditation in higher education. NBA (2019), NAAC (2019), and Aithal (2016) outline key advantages, including:

- Quality Assurance – Ensures compliance with academic standards.
- Recognition – Accredited degrees are widely accepted for employment and further education.
- Institutional Credibility – Strengthens the university's reputation.
- Access to Funding – Facilitates eligibility for government and private grants.
- Continuous Improvement – Encourages innovation in teaching and research.

- Stakeholder Confidence – Enhances trust among students, faculty, and employers.

The primary objective of accreditation is to uphold quality control and assurance in education, training, and research (Nataranja, 2000). It evaluates critical factors such as faculty qualifications, infrastructure, learning resources, and research output, ensuring that institutions align with global academic standards.

Accreditation in Nigeria

The National Universities Commission (NUC) oversees the accreditation of Nigerian universities based on Minimum Academic Standards (MAS). Institutional accreditation is assessed across key areas such as:

- Institutional Vision and Mission
- Governance and Administration
- Library and Learning Resources
- Teaching and Research Quality
- Financial Management and Sustainability (Comfort & Veronica, 2020).

The NUC established Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) in 1987 for 13 academic disciplines, including Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Science, Law, Medicine, and Veterinary Science (NUC, 2019). These standards guide program accreditation and ensure compliance with national and international educational benchmarks.

The accreditation process in Nigeria involves several instruments, including:

- Manual for Accreditation Procedures
- Self-Study Form
- Program Evaluation Form
- Accreditation Panel Report Form
- Accreditation Re-Visitation Form (NUC, 2019).

Challenges in Accreditation

Despite the benefits, several challenges hinder effective accreditation in Nigeria. These include insufficient funding, outdated library resources, inadequate infrastructure, and staffing constraints (Akpan&Etor, 2016). The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) provides financial support, but rapid university expansion has made it difficult to sustain accreditation compliance (Obadara&Alaka, 2013).

Moreover, short accreditation notification periods, corruption in resource allocation, and reliance on borrowed materials for accreditation exercises further complicate the process (Comfort & Veronica, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires proactive university management, increased investment in learning resources, and enhanced librarian training.

Accreditation remains a critical tool for ensuring educational quality and institutional credibility in Nigerian universities. While it offers significant benefits, financial constraints, resource shortages, and administrative inefficiencies present major obstacles. Strengthening funding

mechanisms, enhancing institutional preparedness, and improving library resources are essential for sustaining high accreditation standards.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative survey method to examine the accreditation process of academic programs and resource verification at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria. The research focused on assessing the types, statuses, and challenges of accreditation within the university's satellite libraries. The target population consisted of faculty liaison officers from the 12 satellite libraries, all of whom had previously participated in at least one accreditation exercise. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data on accreditation experiences, challenges, and resource availability. The study employed a purposive sampling technique, selecting participants based on their direct involvement in past accreditation exercises.

Primary data were gathered through questionnaire administration, ensuring a standardized approach to capturing responses. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to quantify respondents' perceptions of accreditation challenges and institutional preparedness. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to identify trends and common issues in accreditation processes. A quantitative approach was chosen to provide objective and measurable insights into accreditation practices at ABU. The use of questionnaires enabled the collection of empirical data, facilitating a systematic assessment of accreditation challenges and their impact on library resources.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1.1 Librarian Ranks in Accreditation Exercise

S/N	Subjects	Frequency	Percentage
1	University Librarian	0	0.0%
2	Senior Librarian	1	8.3%
3	Librarian I	5	41.7%
4	Librarian II	6	50%
5	Assistant Librarian	0	0%
Total		12	100

Table 1.1 presents the distribution of librarians who participated in the accreditation exercise at Ahmadu Bello University. The highest number of respondents were Librarian II (50%) and Librarian I (41.7%), indicating that these ranks play a more active role in accreditation processes. The Senior Librarian (8.3%) had the least representation, while University Librarians and Assistant Librarians (0%) did not directly participate in the accreditation exercise.

This suggests that Librarian I and Librarian II are the most involved in accreditation, likely due to their roles in liaison and accreditation committees. In contrast, Senior Librarians are often heads of divisions, primarily engaged in administrative duties rather than field activities. University Librarians, being top-level administrators, delegate accreditation responsibilities to designated officers. The absence of Assistant Librarians in the process suggests that newer staff members are not actively engaged in accreditation exercises.

Table 1.2 Work Experience of Librarians in Accreditation Exercises

S/N	Working Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1	1-5 years	1	10%
2	6-11 years	7	70%
3	12-25 years	1	10%
4	26-35	1	10%
total		10	100

Table 1.2 presents the work experience distribution of librarians involved in the accreditation process at Ahmadu Bello University. The majority of respondents (70%) have 6–11 years of experience, indicating that mid-career librarians play a significant role in accreditation activities. In contrast, 10% of respondents have 1–5 years, 12–25 years, or 26–35 years of experience, respectively, suggesting lower participation among both junior and highly experienced librarians. These findings imply that librarians with 6–11 years of experience are the most actively engaged in accreditation exercises, likely due to their familiarity with university procedures and accreditation requirements. Junior librarians (1–5 years) may still be undergoing training, while senior librarians (12 years and above) may be more focused on administrative roles rather than direct accreditation participation.

Table 1.3 Types of Accreditation Conducted at Ahmadu Bello University

S/N	Type of accreditation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Program accreditation	7	33.3%
2	Resources verification	7	33.3%
3	Institution level accreditation	7	33.3%
Total		21	100

Table 1.3 presents the distribution of accreditation types conducted at Ahmadu Bello University. The findings indicate that Program Accreditation (33.3%), Resource Verification (33.3%), and Institutional Accreditation (33.3%) are equally experienced within the university. This suggests that accreditation exercises at ABU are comprehensive, covering academic programs, library resources, and overall institutional quality.

The equal distribution implies that satellite librarians are well aware of all accreditation types, highlighting their involvement in ensuring compliance with the National Universities Commission (NUC) standards. The data further suggests that accreditation exercises are routine and systematic, ensuring that university programs, infrastructure, and resources meet required benchmarks.

Table 1.4 Accreditation Status at Ahmadu Bello University

S/N	Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Full Accreditation	11	47.8%
2	Interim Accreditation	8	34.8%
3	Denied Accreditation	4	17.4%
Total		23	100

Table 1.4 presents the accreditation statuses of academic programs and resources at Ahmadu Bello University. The results indicate that Full Accreditation (47.8%) is the most common status, suggesting that nearly half of the accreditation exercises meet the required standards, allowing programs and resources to be sustained without immediate modifications.

However, Interim Accreditation (34.8%) reflects cases where programs or resources require improvements before achieving full accreditation. The Denied Accreditation (17.4%) status highlights significant deficiencies, often due to inadequate manpower, student-to-lecturer ratios, facilities, and library resources. Programs with this status fail to meet the National Universities Commission (NUC) standards, requiring major improvements before re-evaluation. The findings suggest that while most programs attain full accreditation, challenges still exist, necessitating strategic interventions to improve resource allocation and institutional preparedness.

Table 1.5 Challenges Affecting Program Accreditation at Ahmadu Bello University

S/N	Program Accreditation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of current resources	10	27.8%
2	Lack of data base	3	8.3%
3	Lack of power supply	9	25%
4	Lack of funding	8	22.2%
5	Nonfunctional institutional repository	01	2.8%
6	Lack of technical knowhow by satellite librarians	5	13.9%
Total		36	100

Table 1.5 presents the key challenges encountered during program accreditation at Ahmadu Bello University. The most significant issue identified is the lack of current resources (27.8%), which indicates that many academic programs struggle with outdated materials, affecting their compliance with accreditation standards. This is followed by lack of power supply (25%), which disrupts access to digital resources and affects overall library functionality. Other notable challenges include lack of funding (22.2%), which limits the acquisition of essential learning materials, and limited technical expertise among satellite librarians (13.9%), which hinders effective resource management. Additionally, lack of a functional institutional repository (2.8%) and absence of a proper database (8.3%) further complicate accreditation efforts. These findings highlight the urgent need for adequate funding, improved infrastructure, and librarian training to enhance accreditation success and resource availability.

Table 1.6 Challenges in Resource Verification at Ahmadu Bello University

S/N	Resources verification	Frequency	percentage
1	Information resources shortage	8	20.0%
2	Borrowing of resources from staff for just Accreditation	9	22.5%
3	Fake representation of information resources	8	20.0%
4	Improper preparation of exercise	8	20.0%
5	Delay in fund release	7	17.5%
Total		40	100

Table 1.6 presents the major challenges encountered during resource verification for accreditation at Ahmadu Bello University. The most prevalent issue is the borrowing of resources from staff for accreditation purposes (22.5%), indicating a reliance on temporary solutions rather than permanent acquisitions. This practice raises concerns about sustainability and compliance with accreditation standards.

Other significant challenges include shortages of information resources (20%), fake representation of resources (20%), and improper preparation for accreditation exercises (20%), all of which

suggest gaps in institutional planning and resource management. Additionally, delays in fund release (17.5%) further hinder the timely acquisition of necessary resources. These findings highlight the need for sustainable resource acquisition strategies, increased funding, and improved accreditation preparedness to enhance compliance with accreditation requirements.

Table 1.7 Challenges in Institutional Accreditation at Ahmadu Bello University

S/N	Institutional Accreditation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Short notification by N.U.C	7	14.3%
2	Inability to meet the standard	7	14.3%
3	Insufficient manpower	7	14.3%
4	Presentation of resources	2	4.1%
5	Corruption in the institutions	6	12.2%
6	Collection of resources from individual staff	10	20.4%
7	Borrowing for Accreditation purpose	10	20.4%
Total		49	100

Table 1.7 outlines the key challenges affecting institutional accreditation at Ahmadu Bello University. The most critical issues are collection of resources from individual staff (20.4%) and borrowing of resources for accreditation purposes (20.4%), indicating that departments and libraries rely on temporary measures rather than institutional investments in learning resources. This lack of permanent resource acquisition contributes to accreditation failures. Other significant challenges include short notification from the National Universities Commission (NUC) (14.3%), inability to meet accreditation standards (14.3%), and insufficient manpower (14.3%), which hinder effective accreditation preparation. Additionally, corruption in institutions (12.2%) further affects transparency and resource allocation, while poor presentation of resources (4.1%) reflects inadequate planning. These findings emphasize the need for timely accreditation preparation, increased funding, and institutional reforms to improve compliance with accreditation requirements.

Major Findings

This study identified three primary types of accreditation at Ahmadu Bello University: program accreditation, resource verification, and institutional accreditation. The accreditation statuses observed were Full Accreditation, Interim Accreditation, and Denied Accreditation, with Full Accreditation (47.8%) being the most common outcome. However, some programs received Interim Accreditation (34.8%), while 17.4% were denied accreditation due to non-compliance with set standards.

Key challenges affecting accreditation include lack of current resources (27.8%), which has led to the borrowing of materials from individual staff (20.4%) instead of institutional acquisitions. Other notable issues include funding shortages, insufficient manpower, and delays in resource procurement, all of which impact accreditation preparedness and outcomes. These findings highlight the urgent need for sustainable funding, proper resource management, and institutional reforms to improve accreditation success rates.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance accreditation success at Ahmadu Bello University:

1. Regular Mock Accreditation Exercises – University administrators should implement periodic internal accreditation reviews to identify and address deficiencies before official accreditation exercises.
2. Inclusion of Experienced Academic Staff – Faculty members with extensive administrative and accreditation experience should be actively involved in accreditation committees to improve compliance and strategic planning.
3. Timely and Adequate Funding – University management should ensure the prompt release of funds to support resource acquisition, infrastructure improvements, and overall accreditation preparedness.
4. Sustainable Resource Management – Institutions should prioritize permanent acquisition of learning resources rather than relying on temporary measures such as borrowing from staff.
5. Capacity Building for Librarians – Training programs should be introduced to enhance the technical expertise of satellite librarians, ensuring they can effectively manage digital and physical resources required for accreditation.

Conclusion

This study revealed that Ahmadu Bello University primarily undergoes program accreditation, resource verification, and institutional accreditation, with Full Accreditation being the most common outcome. However, challenges such as insufficient resources, inadequate funding, and borrowing of materials hinder accreditation preparedness. Regular accreditation exercises have proven effective in addressing academic program deficiencies and ensuring compliance with the National Universities Commission (NUC) benchmarks. Strengthening accreditation processes through proactive planning, adequate funding, and improved resource management will enhance the quality of academic programs at Ahmadu Bello University and promote long-term institutional excellence.

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